

Louisiana Animal Welfare Commission (LAWC) Assessment Report for Animal Shelter Facilities in Louisiana

Date **23 March 2010**

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Name of Facility **East Baton Rouge Parish Animal Shelter**

There are several state laws that set minimum legal requirements for animal shelters, impoundment facilities, and quarantine facilities. They include (Louisiana R.S. 2431 et seq.)

La. R.S. 2431 to 2439, Humane society may arrange for care of animals; Arrangement with stable for care of animals; Employment of veterinary; Stable to register animals cared for; Determination whether animal may leave stable; Sale of animal on owner's failure to pay for treatment; Liability of society to stable or veterinary; privilege upon animals; Opportunity to owner to treat animal if proper treatment is given; Court review of humane society's treatment of animal, damages limited to costs

La. R.S. 2461 to 2465, Authority of parish governing authorities to adopt, Definitions, General shelter standards, Shelter construction, Operating procedures.

La. R.S. 2471 to 2476 Definitions, Sterilization required, Adoption standards, Confirmation of sterilization, Exceptions, Fees

La. R.S. Branding of animals impounded

La. R. S. 1558(3), Continuing education requirements for certified animal euthanasia technicians

Louisiana Administrative Code, Chapter 51, Part III, The control of rabies and other zoonotic diseases

You should familiarize yourself with these laws and any requirements that may pertain to your facility or its employees.

Many features and practices that enhance facility operations for the animals or the facility staff are not addressed in the above statutes. LAWC considers the recommendations of the American Veterinary Medical Association, the American Animal Control Association, and the Humane Society of the United States in shelter evaluations. The list below should be retained and utilized for self evaluations on a routine basis. This list contains features and practices that strengthen facility operations. Some are required by law (these are labeled as "**MANDATED**") and are reiterated in this supplement as a reinforcement of their requirement.

A. Animal Euthanasia

1. ☒Y ☐N Have staff who perform euthanasia successfully completed a **MANDATED** Louisiana Board of Veterinary Medicine-approved euthanasia training course within 120 days of initial employment and earned the required 6 hours of continuing education credits annually?
2. ☒Y ☐N Is a written protocol available for the euthanasia of ill or injured animals in the field or before the end of the impoundment period?

3. ☒Y ☐N Is a written protocol available for routine euthanasia?

Questions 4-10 are for facilities using injectable euthanasia:

4. ☒Y ☐N If a written protocol is available, does the protocol require two or more people to be present to perform injectable euthanasia techniques?
5. ☒Y ☐N Are the injectable euthanasia standards **MANDATED** in the latest report of the American Veterinary Medical Association on Euthanasia, being met?
6. ☒Y ☐N Is there a sturdy, sanitizable table in the euthanasia room?
7. ☒Y ☐N Is the lighting sufficient to allow easy visualization of the injection site?
8. ☒Y ☐N Are the controlled drugs stored in a securely locked cabinet?
9. ☒Y ☐N If controlled drugs are used in the field, are they securely locked in the animal control vehicle?
10. ☒Y ☐N Are euthanasia drug logs used, kept current, and available for inspection?

Question 11 is for facilities using carbon monoxide euthanasia:

11. ☐Y ☐N Does the carbon monoxide chamber meet standards for safe operation and is the machine in good working order?

B. Management:

1. ☒Y ☐N Has the facility manager successfully completed a Louisiana Animal Control Association-approved Animal Control Officer Basic Training course?
2. ☒Y ☐N Is an office available at the facility, or elsewhere, for facility staff and/or animal control officers?
3. ☒Y ☐N Is the facility attended by a veterinarian or is there a relationship established with one or more local veterinarians to provide advice, assistance, or treatment to animals?
4. ☒Y ☐N Does this facility employ a full-time veterinarian
5. ☐Y ☒N Are formal **MANDATED** semi-annual inspections conducted by an authorized parish official to ensure compliance with state statutes?
6. ☒Y ☐N Are standard operation procedures (SOP) written for the facility's operation, including housing, cleaning, animal care, and facility maintenance?
7. ☒Y ☐N Are animals separated by their behavior and age in addition to their state of health, species, sex, and size (separation by health, age (puppies and kittens separated from adults) species, sex (unneutered males separated from females) is **MANDATED** by law)?
8. ☒Y ☐N Does the facility have a sterilization program for its adopted animals (this is **MANDATED** for animal control facilities under La. R.S. 2472)?
9. ☒Y ☐N Have staff been immunized against rabies?
10. ☒Y ☐N Do animal contact staff work with terrestrial wildlife or bats?
11. ☐Y ☒N Are staff rabies vaccinations evidenced by adequate titers (This is only recommended if bats are handled routinely. This is also recommended if terrestrial wildlife are handled routinely in skunk variant rabies endemic areas of the state)?
12. ☒Y ☐N Does this shelter restrict or ban adoptions of pit bulls?
13. ☐Y ☒N Does this shelter restrict or ban adoptions of any other breed or type animal?
14. ☐Y ☒N Does this shelter sell or donate live animals for education or research?
15. ☒Y ☐N Was this sheriff a plaintiff or defendant in any civil or criminal court case in the past year?
16. ☒Y ☐N Are shelter standards included in city or parish ordinances?

17. ☒Y ☐N Are hours and emergency telephone prominently displayed on building exterior as **MANDATED** by La. R.S. 2463?
18. ☒Y ☐N Does the shelter have a receiving area for the public to bring in or adopt animals?
19. ☒Y ☐N Does the shelter have an area for the public to acquaint themselves with adoptable animals?

C. Records:

1. ☒Y ☐N Are records computerized?
2. ☒Y ☐N Do the animal records include accurate descriptions of the animals? Suggested information includes: impounding officer's name, date and time of capture, location of capture, tag and/or collar identification, breed, sex, age, size (height and weight), coat color and pattern, ear and tail types, description of markings and unusual findings (scars, tattoos, microchips), and the condition of the animal.
3. ☒Y ☐N Do the animals' records document daily observation?
4. ☒Y ☐N Are incoming animals scanned for microchips and/or identification tattoos?

D. General Structure:

1. ☒Y ☐N Is a secured area used to safely unload and load animals to prevent their escape?
2. ☒Y ☐N Is the facility built in such a way that it prevents access by unauthorized persons?
3. ☒Y ☐N Is a secure area for storing vehicles available?
4. ☒Y ☐N Is a secure area for storing outdoor equipment available?
5. ☒Y ☐N Are drains covered with grates to prevent animals from stepping into them?
6. ☒Y ☐N Are drains covered with grates to prevent people from stepping into them?
7. ☐Y ☒N Are there problems apparent with drainage or moisture at this facility?

E. Water and Electric Power:

1. ☒Y ☐N Are an adequate number of water faucets available?
2. ☒Y ☐N Are the water hoses strong and in good repair?
3. ☒Y ☐N Are adequate hose bibs and hoses available?
4. ☐Y ☒N Are hoses kept off the floor when not in use?
5. ☒Y ☐N Is hot water available?
6. ☒Y ☐N Is a backup generator available to provide electricity during power outages?
7. ☐Y ☒N In the animal areas, are the electrical outlets mounted at least 3-4 feet above the floor?
8. ☐Y ☒N In the animal areas, do the electrical outlets have protective coverings?
9. ☒Y ☐N Are the electrical outlets, in areas of water use, Ground Fault Interrupt (GFI) protected?
10. ☒Y ☐N Are there adequate sinks to wash food and water bowls and other equipment?
11. ☐Y ☒N If a bathtub or large sink is used to bathe animals or wash equipment, is there adequate toe space under it to allow staff to work comfortably?
12. ☒Y ☐N Is there a restroom for staff use?

F. Waste Disposal:

1. ☒Y ☐N Is there a holding area for carcasses awaiting final disposal?
2. ☒Y ☐N Is there a freezer or refrigerator to store animal carcasses until final disposal?
3. ☒Y ☐N Do the dog pen floors slope ¼-½ inch per foot toward drains and gutters?
4. ☒Y ☐N Is animal waste washed into a sewer or septic system?
5. ☒Y ☐N Does this shelter employ special practices for handling medical or potentially infectious waste?

G. Storage:

1. ☐Y ☒N Is adequate space available for facility supplies?
2. ☐Y ☒N Are cleaning chemicals stored in a separate area, room, or cabinet?
3. ☒Y ☐N Is adequate space available to store the current quantity of animal food?
4. ☒Y ☐N Is the food storage area clean and free of spilled food?
5. ☒Y ☐N Is there a procedure to use older food first?
6. ☐Y ☒N Are storage shelves and racks at least 12 inches off the floor and at least 4 inches from walls to permit adequate air circulation around food products?
7. ☒Y ☐N Are food storage containers adequately sealed against infestation by insects or other vermin?

H. Primary Enclosures:

1. ☐Y ☒N Is one dog housed per pen?
2. ☐Y ☒N Do cat cages offer a minimum of 4 square feet per cat?
3. ☐Y ☒N Are the dog pen side walls solid to at least 4 –5 feet in height between animals?
4. ☐Y ☒N Do the pens have tops on them?
5. ☐Y ☒N If the pens have tops, do the tops offer at least a 7-foot clearance?
6. ☒Y ☐N Does the chain-link fencing of the dog pens appear to be at least 9-gauge wire (heavier than typical fences)?
7. ☒Y ☐N Is the dog-pen fencing securely attached to the frames and gates?
8. ☐Y ☒N Do the dog pens offer indoor and outdoor access?
9. ☐Y ☒N Are guillotine doors present between the indoor and outdoor runs?
10. ☒Y ☐N If guillotine doors are present, can these doors be operated by staff outside the pen?
11. ☒Y ☐N Do the gates on the cages and pens latch securely?
12. ☒Y ☐N Is there a way to prevent the general public from entering the animal containment area without the knowledge of facility staff?
13. ☐Y ☒N Are primary enclosures constructed of materials that are easily sanitized?
14. ☒Y ☐N Are primary enclosures well maintained and in good repair?

I. Feeding/ Watering:

1. ☐Y ☒N Is a work table that can be easily sanitized available in the food preparation area?
2. ☐Y ☒N Are water bowls secured in the cages to prevent tipping?
3. ☒Y ☐N Are food and water bowls washed and sanitized daily?
4. ☒Y ☐N Are shelves or racks present to store food and water containers that are drying?

J. Pest Control:

1. ☒Y ☐N Is the premise maintained so that the potential for rodents and insect pests are kept to a minimum?
2. ☐Y ☒N Does the facility have a program to remove external parasites from animals as they enter the facility?

3. ☒Y ☐N If a program exists, does the product's label include the target species?
 4. ☒Y ☐N If a program exists, are personal protective equipment and training offered to staff who use parasiticides?

K. Rabies Quarantine

1. ☒Y ☐N Does the facility quarantine animals for rabies observation? *If "no," skip the remainder of this section.*
 2. ☒Y ☐N Is it easy to distinguish which animals are quarantined for rabies observation and which animals are housed in quarantine pens due to "overflow"?
 3. ☒Y ☐N Is public access prohibited from the quarantine area by a secure door or gate?
 4. ☐Y ☐N If a secure door or gate is not available, is there a barrier to exclude the public from the quarantine area?
 5. ☐Y ☒N Are there guillotine doors to confine rabies-suspect dogs in one part of the pen during cleaning or inclement weather?
 6. ☐Y ☐N If guillotine doors are available, can these doors be operated by staff outside the pen?
 7. ☐Y ☒N Should testing of animal brains be required, would this shelter submit the sample to the OPH laboratory for analysis?
 8. ☐Y ☒N Does this shelter participate in the OPH rabies testing and surveillance program?

L. Disease: regarding the following diseases, please rate the severity of the problem with these diseases over the past year.

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. <input type="checkbox"/> Major | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor | <input type="checkbox"/> No problem | Intestinal parasites |
| 2. <input type="checkbox"/> Major | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor | <input type="checkbox"/> No problem | Scabies (mange) |
| 3. <input type="checkbox"/> Major | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor | <input type="checkbox"/> No problem | Ringworm (dermatophytes) |
| 4. <input type="checkbox"/> Major | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor | <input type="checkbox"/> No problem | Parvovirus |
| 5. <input type="checkbox"/> Major | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor | <input type="checkbox"/> No problem | Canine distemper |
| 6. <input type="checkbox"/> Major | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor | <input type="checkbox"/> No problem | Canine cough |
| 7. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Major | <input type="checkbox"/> Minor | <input type="checkbox"/> No problem | Feline upper respiratory disease |
| 8. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Major | <input type="checkbox"/> Minor | <input type="checkbox"/> No problem | Feline diarrhea |
| 9. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Major | <input type="checkbox"/> Minor | <input type="checkbox"/> No problem | Canine heartworm disease |
| 10. <input type="checkbox"/> Major | <input type="checkbox"/> Minor | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No problem | Feline leukemia |

M. Infection Control

1. ☐Y ☒N Are all animal isolated on intake to this facility and screened in a separate area for disease and temperament before being placed in the general population?
 2. ☒Y ☐N Are all animals vaccinated (Dogs: distemper, adenovirus, parainfluenza, parvovirus, leptospirosis, bordetella. Cats: rhinotracheitis, calicivirus, chlamydia, panleukopenia, feline leukemia) upon intake to the facility?
 3. ☐Y ☐N Are all animals vaccinated after being determined to be adoptable?
 4. ☐Y ☒N Are incoming animals checked for heartworms?
 a. ☒Y ☐N (only adoptable are checked for heartworms)
 5. ☐Y ☒N Are incoming animals dewormed for intestinal parasites?
 a. ☒Y ☐N (only adoptable are dewormed for intestinal parasites)
 6. ☐Y ☒N Are rabies vaccines administered at this facility?
 7. ☒Y ☐N Are rabies vaccines required after pets are adopted out of the facility?

N. Population Control

1. ☒ Y ☐ N Are all animals determined to be adoptable spayed or neutered prior to adoption?
2. ☐ Y ☐ N Are only some animals spayed or neutered prior to adoption?
3. ☐ Y ☐ N Are intact animals that are adopted required to be spayed or neutered after adoption?

LAWC Comments and suggestions:

A. The euthanasia area featured large chain link doors with strands of barbed wire across a gap in the top of the fencing. The treatment of this gate with barbed wire illustrates the shelter's concern with security; however inspectors recognize a potential risk of injuries to cats that may be able to climb to the top of the fence attempting escape. Perhaps netting or some other type of wiring could be used to seal the gap.

A11. No carbon monoxide chamber is utilized at this facility.

B5. Louisiana law states that "shelters should be inspected at least once every six months by an authorized representative of the parish to determine compliance with the requirements" set forth in state statutes. Although the supervisory structure of the shelter was thoroughly explained to the auditors, no written record of a formal system of inspection by any parish official was brought forth. LAWAC suggests that the parish establish a regular program of inspection and document the results for later examination by OPH auditors. This system of inspection should be recorded in a written policy.

B11. Animal handler rabies titers are not routinely checked to ensure adequate immunity. East Baton Rouge Parish is not considered in an area endemic for terrestrial rabies, therefore animal contact personnel would be identified in the "infrequent" exposure category by CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices. East Baton Rouge Animal Control personnel do, however, handle bat submissions for rabies testing. If live bats are routinely handled, those handling the bats would be considered to be in the "frequent" exposure category, and every two year titers would be recommended.

B15. Although East Baton Rouge Animal Control was a defendant in a civil lawsuit, the lawsuit had no relationship to management or humane issues.

E4. Inspectors observed a small number of hoses resting on kennel floors. At the time of observation there were no workers observed to be actively cleaning. This may have been a momentary oversight, but LAWAC wishes to remind management of the importance of requirements to properly store equipment, thereby promoting shelter safety.

E7. Not all electrical outlets are mounted at least 3-4 feet above the floor.

E8. Most outlets feature protective covering. In areas of the shelter where animals can come in contact with outlets, it is recommended that the outlets be equipped with protective covers. For safety of workers, due to the use of great quantities of water in the shelter, all outlets should be retrofitted with covers.

E11. Inspectors did not observe any "toe space" under the bathtub in the surgery area.

G1. Certain areas of the shelter (e.g. the veterinarian's workspace, the "volunteer office that was also used for the public to acquaint with animals, some shelf areas in kennels) appeared cluttered and featured what appeared to be haphazard storage of cleaning supplies, animal treats, shelter paperwork, etc. In the veterinary workspace it is obvious that this results from the reality of inadequate space for the procedures taking place in the structure. In other areas care should be exercised by the staff to separate items in a safe and organized manner.

G2. Cleaning supplies should be stored in separate areas or, when total separation is not possible, on lower shelves away from food supplies or bedding. In most cases this shelter stored items properly, however there were a few exceptions as stated previously.

G6. The food storage area was clean and well organized and all dry foods were stacked on pallets, however dry food was stored against the wall. LAWC recommends that the food be stored with a space of at least four inches between food products and the walls. The storage methods observed may hinder appropriate ventilation and hasten degradation or spoilage.

H1. The shelter limits to 3 the number of animals housed per cage. However the animals are separated by health status, age, species and sex.

H2. Most cat cages in the facility are of adequate size. Inspectors did observe the use of small, metal temporary holding cages in the veterinary surgical area, however these primary housing structures were not utilized for long term residence but were only used in areas where restriction of movement may be desirable.

H3. Some dog runs meet the criteria, but many do not feature separators of sufficient height to minimize contact between animals. This deficiency may present problems with stress and/or containment of contagious diseases.

H4. Again, some but not all dog runs featured cage "tops". Cages with "tops" are preferred to discourage climbing that could result in breaches of security and/or biosecurity as well as injury to animals.

H5. In general cage tops were not 7 feet in height but were at least 6 feet in height. A height of this extent has very little bearing on the animals, but may be a safety issue for workers.

H8. Although most dog cages did not offer residents outside access, inspectors observed efforts by shelter staff to provide outside exposure to animals.

H9. Guillotine doors were present in some runs, but not all. Guillotine doors were observed in the more contemporary areas of the shelter, indicating the shelter management's awareness of the benefits of these types of cages.

H13. Most primary enclosures are constructed of stainless steel, which is conducive to sanitation. Some structures utilized to house cats are of painted metal construction, cages of the type intended for temporary housing of animals for short periods of time. Paint on these type of structures can become pitted and rust. These conditions are not conducive to sanitation and are not resistant to accumulation of substrate that may promote bacterial growth. Stainless steel or non-porous fiberglass cages are preferred and would provide surfaces that are much more easily sanitized, are resistant to corrosion and the resulting accumulation of organic debris. Workers at the facility appear to be practicing an intense program of sanitation on these cages since all were found to be clean and free from accumulated debris.

I1. As is characteristic of most animal shelters in Louisiana, the East Baton Rouge Parish Animal Shelter exhibits a lack of food preparation tables or general purpose work tables in kennel areas. The presence of these items permits staff to perform tasks, such as food preparation, under safer and more comfortable conditions.

I2. In most cases water and food bowls were securely fastened to cages to prevent tipping. In cases where water was provided in free standing containers, the receptacles utilized were large pails of water that were continuously monitored by staff and maintained in a full state.

J2. The management of the facility recognizes the potential problems associated with intestinal parasites in animals, but adequate staffing is not available to treat all animals with anti-parasitics on intake. There are currently 4 animal caretakers for 300 pens. This deficiency in staffing is likely responsible for several problems in worker morale and in turnover problems with staff, since the workload appears to be excessive.

K5. Guillotine doors were not observed in the rabies quarantine area. These items enhance the safety of workers by limiting exposure to potentially dangerous animals. Guillotine doors are on order; however these doors will not function as passageways between indoor and outdoor facilities. This shelter is, in essence, an indoor facility, therefore the guillotine doors will provide access to neighboring cages, which achieves the same effect.

K7 & 8. The shelter submits animal brains for rabies testing to the Louisiana Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory at the LSU School of Veterinary Medicine. OPH reminds the shelter that, in instances where human victims are involved, the Public Health Laboratory will perform testing free of charge. The only requirement is that the submission be cleared first by the state public health veterinarian (504-219-4593) or a member of the Infectious Disease Epidemiology Section Staff (800-256-2748). Data pursuant to bites processed by the public health laboratory also are included in rabies surveillance data submitted to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

M1. If assets become available the shelter should consider construction of a dedicated observation and/or isolation ward for incoming animals. The present facility does not appear to foster the development of such a "quarantine" area.

M 1-7 & N1-3. Although not perfect, the infection control and population control programs at the East Baton Rouge Parish shelter exceed those of most Louisiana shelters, and was demonstrated to be an effective program.

Additional comments:

Plastic food and water bowls are utilized in a limited number of animal cages. These types of containers may be chewed by animals and can deteriorate with time so as not to permit thorough disinfection. LAWC recommends that, if use of plastic bowls is a necessity, the bowls be monitored closely for pitting and damage, and be replaced as necessary. Stainless steel food and water bowls are preferred.

Lighting in several areas of the shelter is inadequate. Inspectors observed several areas that, at full illumination, were dark enough to represent a potential hazard in dealing with some animals.

The veterinary "clinic" area appeared extremely disorganized and could have been maintained in a more sanitary condition. Perhaps additional shelving could temporarily address the lack of storage facilities.

Inspectors were impressed with the size of the operation and the large numbers of animals processed at the facility. Inspectors were also very pleased with the conditions and maintenance of the facility; however OPH inspectors related a very high ratio of animals to animal contact employees. Four animal caretakers for the approximately 400 animals present at any given time is unacceptable. East Baton Rouge Parish authorities should consider addition of animal contact employees to reduce stress among employees, increase efficiency of operations, and eliminate potential for mistakes or procedural breakdowns due to the apparent lack of staffing.

RATING:

- ☐ Generally exceeds standards
- ☒ Meets standards
- ☐ Needs significant improvements to meet standard

Susan Schneider, Commissioner:

Susan Schneider

Date: May 27, 2010